Isles of Wonders

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EXPLORING EARTH'S FINEST ISLANDS

Malta

Uncovering "The Rock"

GOZO
Hidden beaches

VALLETTA
Floriana

MDINA
In the night

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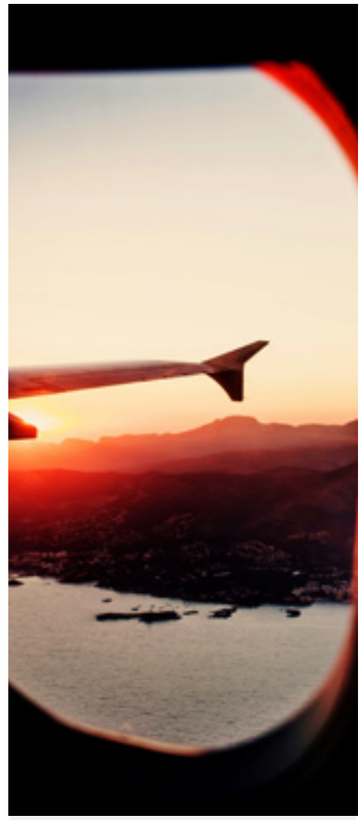

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LETTER FROM EDITOR

Every island has its own heartbeat. In Malta, it pulses through ancient alleys, sunlit coastlines, and the warmth of its people. This issue celebrates the quiet beauty and bold character of "The Rock," as locals lovingly call it.

From the glowing streets of Mdina to the secluded beaches of Gozo, we invite you to wander beyond postcards and into stories that linger. Whether you're chasing street food in Valletta or gazing at fireworks in July skies, Malta surprises in every corner.

Here's to discovery — both on the map, and in ourselves.

— Mary Goldheart, Editor-in-Chief,

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MALTA

MALTA

RISING from the center of the Mediterranean, Malta is a country of contrasts. Its cities are carved from stone but buzz with energy. Its coastlines are rugged yet welcoming. With influences from Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Normans, and the Knights of St. John, Malta is a cultural palimpsest that speaks in architecture, language, and cuisine.
Walking through Valletta is like turning the pages of a history book. Baroque churches, palazzos, and military bastions stand alongside bustling cafs and open-air concerts. The island's compact size allows for fast transitions: morning in the capital, lunch by a hidden beach, and dinner in a sleepy village.

General Info:
Despite its deep historical roots, Malta feels young. Its festivals, cuisine, and people create a vivid energy that continues to evolve without losing the echoes of the past. But beyond the guidebooks and timelines, Malta is a place of personal moments. An elderly shopkeeper offering stories as freely as he gives directions. The hum of boats returning at dusk. The scent of sea salt, thyme, and pastizzi wafting through ancient alleys. Malta is full of invitations. To explore. To taste. To reflect. Its size belies its complexity. One day you're wandering through the grandeur of the Co-Cathedral of St. John; the next you're trekking a sunlit ridge in Dingli. Each step reveals more—of the island and of yourself.

"THE ISLANDS ARE LIKE AN OPEN-AIR MUSEUM, WHERE EVERY STONE HAS A STORY"

FLORIANA

Perched above the sapphire waters of the Grand Harbour, Valletta is a city that carries sunlight in its stones. Its gridded streets promise order, yet they tumble into quiet corners where everyday life unfolds unhurried. Golden facades catch the sea breeze, while watchful bastions recall centuries of stories told by the waves.

"Valletta is a living balcony over the Mediterranean."

Narrow Streets:
moments. A fisherman repairing his nets in the morning hush. The fragrance of fresh-baked ftira mixing with the salt air. The echo of footsteps beneath balconied arcades, where shadows to follow its light until it meets the sea.

Everyday life:
By day, the city wears its history proudly. Sunlight falls in sharp angles between tall limestone facades, revealing tiny shrines in street corners and bright-painted doors worn smooth by decades of touch. Gilded church interiors glow softly in the midday hush, while bustling markets spill over with the colors of fresh produce, baskets of herbs, and the sparkle of handmade crafts. From the Upper Barrakka Gardens, the view opens like a painted postcard.

As evening draws in, a softer Valletta emerges. Street lamps flicker to life, casting pools of warm light that catch on wrought-iron balconies and carved cornices. From tucked-away wine bars and tiny cafes, music drifts into the cobbled streets, mingling with the low murmur of conversation. Along the waterfront, the harbour lights ripple across the water like scattered stars, and the air carries a salt-tinged breeze that feels both new and ancient.

VALLETTA

"Valletta doesn't just face the sea, it embraces it in every heartbeat."

MDINA

THE SILENT CITY

PERCHED high on a hill in the heart of Malta, Mdina is the island's ancient walled city — a place where time feels suspended and every stone holds a story. Known as the "Silent City," its narrow streets wind between honey-coloured limestone walls, leading to grand palaces, hidden courtyards, and sun-dappled squares. Here, centuries of history unfold quietly, from medieval fortifications to Baroque fa ades, all preserved with care. The city's stillness is part of its magic: the sound of footsteps on cobblestones replaces the roar of traffic, and the gentle clip-clop of horses' hooves echoes through the lanes.

"MDINA DOESN'T JUST PRESERVE HISTORY, IT BREATHES IT."

Narrow Streets:

Walking through Mdina is like stepping into another world. Light filters gently between high stone walls, revealing glimpses of ornate doorways, brightly painted shutters, and wrought-iron balconies overflowing with flowers. Every turn reveals a fresh vignette — a secluded garden, a chapel door left ajar, a vista stretching across the island to the sea.

The city's elevated position offers sweeping views in all directions, especially from the bastions where the countryside rolls away into a patchwork of fields. By day, it basks in golden sunlight; by night, soft lamplight casts a warm glow on its quiet streets, making it one of Malta's most romantic spots.

Carriages:

One of the most charming ways to experience Mdina is by traditional horse-drawn carriage, known as a karozzin. These leisurely rides take you through the city gates, past noble houses and along the winding streets where knights and noblemen once walked. The steady rhythm of the horse's hooves adds to the city's timeless atmosphere, offering a glimpse of what life might have felt like centuries ago. Whether explored on foot or by carriage, Mdina invites you to slow down, wander without hurry, and let the layers of history reveal themselves at their own unhurried pace.

Rising above the Maltese countryside, Mdina is a city where the past still walks alongside the present. Encircled by mighty walls and crowned with stately architecture, it tells its story not in loud proclamations but in quiet, measured whispers. Known as the "Silent City," its calm is both striking and inviting — a pause in the rush of the modern world. Every facade here carries the patina of centuries: carved stone balconies, ornate doorways.

"Mdina's architecture is not built, it's composed, like music in stone."

Sightseeing

Stepping through Mdina's gates is like turning a page into another century. Along its narrow lanes, palaces stand beside humble dwellings, chapels nestle in shaded corners, and secret courtyards peek out from behind wooden doors. Visitors pause to admire the grand Baroque cathedral of St. Paul, with its elegant facade and marble-lined interior. From the bastions, the island opens up in a breathtaking panorama — rolling farmland, scattered villages, and the glinting sea beyond. Museums reveal treasures from Roman mosaics to medieval relics, each piece a fragment of Malta's layered story.

The experience is as much about the atmosphere as the landmarks themselves. In the soft hush, you hear the rustle of leaves, the distant call of a church bell, and the faint echo of footsteps on cobblestone. Mdina is best savoured slowly — to linger over a view, trace the details of a carved doorway, or simply stand still and feel it.

In Mdina, every fade is a memory carved in Pretty limestone.

Set high on a hill in central Malta, Mdina is a jewel of stone and silence. Encircled by thick medieval walls and crowned with elegant palaces, it has been the island's seat of power for centuries. Known as the "Silent City," it whispers its history through every cobblestoned lane and sun-warmed facade.

Within the gates, time seems to slow — no cars, no rush, only the gentle rhythm of footsteps and the occasional clip-clop of a horse-drawn carriage. Exploring Mdina is a journey into layers of history. Its narrow streets twist between noble residences and centuries-old churches, leading to hidden courtyards and shaded piazzas where flowers spill from wrought-iron balconies. The magnificent St. Paul's Cathedral stands at the heart of the city, its Baroque facade catching the golden light. Climb to the bastions and the island unfolds in a sweeping panorama — fields stitched in stone walls, distant villages, and the glimmering Mediterranean. Museums tucked into the old palaces tell stories from Phoenician times to the era of the Knights of St. John, while quiet chapels offer moments of reflection.

MDINA IN THE NIGHT

When the sun sinks behind the Maltese hills and day-trippers drift away, Mdina transforms. The "Silent City" becomes quieter still, its golden limestone softly aglow in the lamplight. Moonlight spills over the bastions, casting long shadows across the cobblestones. The hum of the modern world fades, replaced by the faint rustle of leaves and the distant chime of a church bell. Wandering these streets after dark feels less like a stroll and more like slipping into a dream — a timeless, candle-lit world where every turn seems to hold a secret.

"The silence of Mdina glows brightest under moonlight."

There's a particular magic to walking here at night. The warm amber of the lamps brings out the deep textures in the limestone walls, revealing centuries of history in every worn block. Balconies are draped in shadows, doorways hint at lives quietly unfolding behind them, and the high walls close in just enough to make you feel enclosed in another time. The air is cooler, scented faintly with the stone itself, and footsteps echo in the stillness. From the bastions, the countryside lies in soft darkness, dotted with twinkling lights from distant villages.

A night in Mdina is an invitation to slow your pace even further. Sit on a quiet bench in one of its small squares. Lean against the bastion walls and feel the warm stone hold the memory of the day's sun. Let the city's silence wash over you until the night feels as though it belongs entirely to you.

A slow wander may lead you to the bastions, where the night stretches endlessly towards the sea. Or to a tiny piazza where a single lantern swings gently in the breeze. Pause there. Sit on a bench, lean against the warm stone that still remembers the day's heat, and listen until the city speaks in its soft, wordless sort of way.

"Wander Mdina after dark and time slips away beneath your feet."

GOZO

Gozo is Malta's greener, quieter sister — an island where the clock ticks more slowly and the days are measured by tides, not hours. It greets you with terraced hillsides, patchwork fields, and honey-colored villages that seem unchanged for generations. Farmers still tend small plots with the same care their grandparents did; fishing boats still return at dawn with the day's catch.

"The island does not rush. Neither should you."

Gozo is a place for stillness — but not stagnation. In summer, village festas erupt in music, fireworks, and processions. In winter, wild herbs scent the air along coastal trails. Every season is a different face of the same gentle soul.

Turqouise waters:

Gozo's coastline is a breathtaking mosaic of rugged cliffs, hidden coves, and shimmering bays. At Dwejra, towering limestone cliffs meet the restless sea, sending sprays of turquoise water into the air. Ramla Bay welcomes visitors with its unusual red-gold sands that glow warmly beneath the Mediterranean sun. Nearby, Wied il-Giasri carves a narrow, dramatic inlet perfect for a quiet swim, surrounded by soaring cliffs and untouched nature. Inland, winding country lanes meander past prickly pear hedges and low stone walls, leading to small chapels perched like silent guardians over the peaceful landscape.

Quiet beaches:

Away from the well-trodden paths, Gozo offers tranquil beaches where the pace slows and nature takes center stage. San Blas Bay, with its soft golden sand and crystal-clear shallows, is a favorite for those seeking solitude. Mgarr ix-Xini's sheltered cove provides a peaceful retreat, framed by wildflowers and fragrant herbs that scent the warm sea breeze. These quiet beaches, embraced by rolling hills and dotted with prickly pear hedges, invite visitors to relax, explore tide pools, or simply listen to the gentle rhythm of the waves lapping the shore.

Gozo's coastline is a captivating mosaic of rugged limestone cliffs, rocky shores, and serene sandy beaches, each telling a story carved by the elements over millennia. The island's distinctive rocky formations, shaped by wind and waves, rise dramatically from the turquoise Mediterranean, creating breathtaking panoramas that draw

visitors and locals alike. These natural sculptures frame secluded coves and sheltered bays where crystal-clear waters invite swimmers and snorkelers to explore vibrant underwater worlds teeming with colorful marine life.

"Gozo's shores blend rugged beauty with timeless tradition."

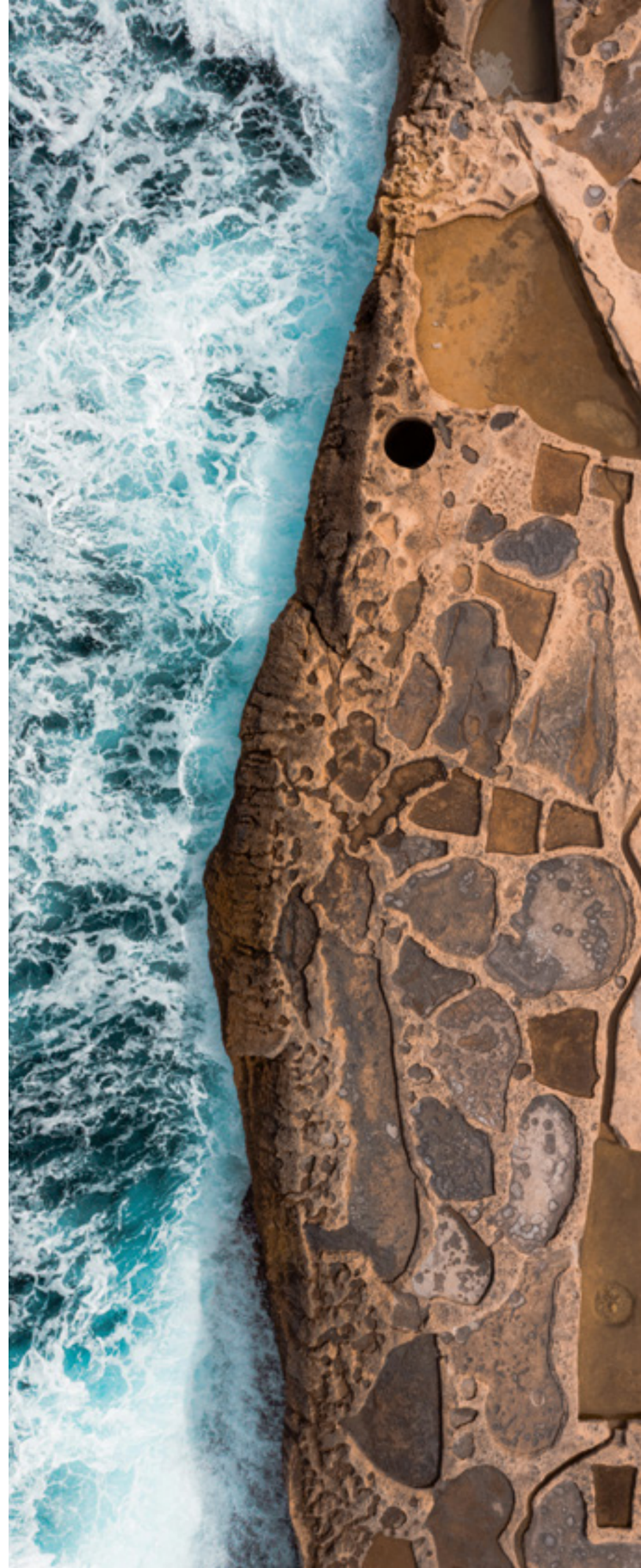
Along the coast, weather-beaten rocks offer an ever-changing landscape, from jagged edges softened by time to smooth platforms perfect for sunbathing or watching the sunset. Tide pools nestled among the stones are miniature ecosystems, alive with starfish, crabs, and tiny fish, rewarding curious explorers with glimpses of nature's delicate balance. The island's sandy beaches, though fewer in number, are gems of golden and reddish hues, offering tranquil retreats away from the bustle. At Ramla Bay, the largest sandy stretch on the island, visitors find soft, warm sand kissed by gentle waves, while smaller beaches like San Blas and Mgarr ix-Xini offer quiet corners framed by wild herbs and rugged cliffs.

"Cliffs, coves, and beaches—Gozo's coast invites discovery."

The Gozo salt pans are a remarkable testament to centuries-old traditional salt harvesting techniques, carefully carved into the rugged coastline of the island. These shallow, flat pools are filled with seawater, which then slowly evaporates under the strong Mediterranean sun, leaving behind pure, natural sea salt. This process, repeated year after year, has shaped a distinctive and striking landscape—an intricate patchwork of geometric shapes reflecting the sky and sea.

More than just a place for salt production, the salt pans are a living cultural heritage site, connecting the island's past to its present. They provide vital resources for the local community and sustain a centuries-old way of life. The pans attract photographers, nature enthusiasts, and history buffs, drawn by the unique combination of natural beauty and incredible human ingenuity.

"Gozo's salt pans: where tradition meets the sea."



VICTORIA

NAVIGATING NARROW WINDING PATHS

AT the heart of Gozo lies Victoria — the island's spirited capital and cultural crossroads. Known locally as Rabat, this small city holds the soul of Gozo in its winding streets, bustling markets, and centuries-old landmarks. Its crown jewel, the Cittadella, rises from the centre like a guardian of history. Within its limestone walls, narrow alleys twist past ancient houses, tiny chapels, and hidden courtyards that whisper stories of knights, farmers, and merchants who once walked these paths. From the ramparts, the island stretches in every direction, a panorama of patchwork fields, church domes, and the glittering Mediterranean. Down below, Victoria hums with daily life. Independence Square buzzes with caf s spilling onto the pavements, where locals sip coffee and watch the world pass by. The market bursts with colour — stalls piled high with sun-ripened produce, fragrant herbs, and the catch of the day brought in from nearby harbours. Shops sell everything from fresh pastizzi to delicate lace, each item carrying a piece of Gozo's heritage.

Victoria is more than a capital; it is the island's meeting place. Every road leads here, every festival passes through here, and every visitor leaves with its memory. In summer, the air fills with the sounds of marching bands, church bells, and fireworks echoing against the Cittadella walls. In winter, the pace slows, but the city's warmth remains — in the friendly greetings of shopkeepers, the quiet devotion of chapel-goers, and the timeless glow of its honey-stone streets. To walk Victoria is to walk the history, heart, and heartbeat of Gozo.

Beyond its historic heart, Victoria is also a gateway to discovery. Just a short walk from the city centre, quiet neighbourhoods lead to terraced hillsides where farmers tend the same fertile plots their families have worked for generations. Footpaths wind toward chapels perched on ridges, each offering sweeping views of the island's valleys and villages. By day, Victoria invites exploration; by night, it glows softly under lamplight, its streets echoing with the murmur of evening conversations and the scent of fresh bread drifting from hidden bakeries. Here, the pace may be gentle, but the spirit is ever-alive.

SERVICES

TOP HOTELS

Casa Maris Boutique Hotel (Valletta)
Il-Wied Farmhouse (Gozo countryside)
The Phoenicia (Luxury, Floriana)
Comino Hotel & Eco Bungalows
(for the adventurer)

TRAVEL

Valletta to Mdina: ~€20
Airport to Gozo Ferry: ~€35

Need a lift?
Call **eCabs: +356 2138 3838**

USEFUL APPS

Visit Malta – Official tourism app
Tallinja – Public bus routes & timetables
Gozo App – Events, maps, and alerts
Xewkija Tower VR – Historic tour in AR

CURRENCY

Malta uses the **EURO (€)**.
Credit cards are widely accepted, even in taxis and beach caf s.
ATMs are easy to find in all major towns.
Local tip: Carry coins for small markets.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Visit Malta – Official tourism app
Tallinja – Public bus routes & timetables
Gozo App – Events, maps, and alerts
Xewkija Tower VR – Historic tour in AR

FERRIES

FERRY TO GOZO:
Departs from Cirkewwa (every 30–45 min)
Visit: gozochannel.com

COMINO BLUE LAGOON CRUISES:
Book at Sliema Waterfront or online
Best times: Early morning or after 4 PM

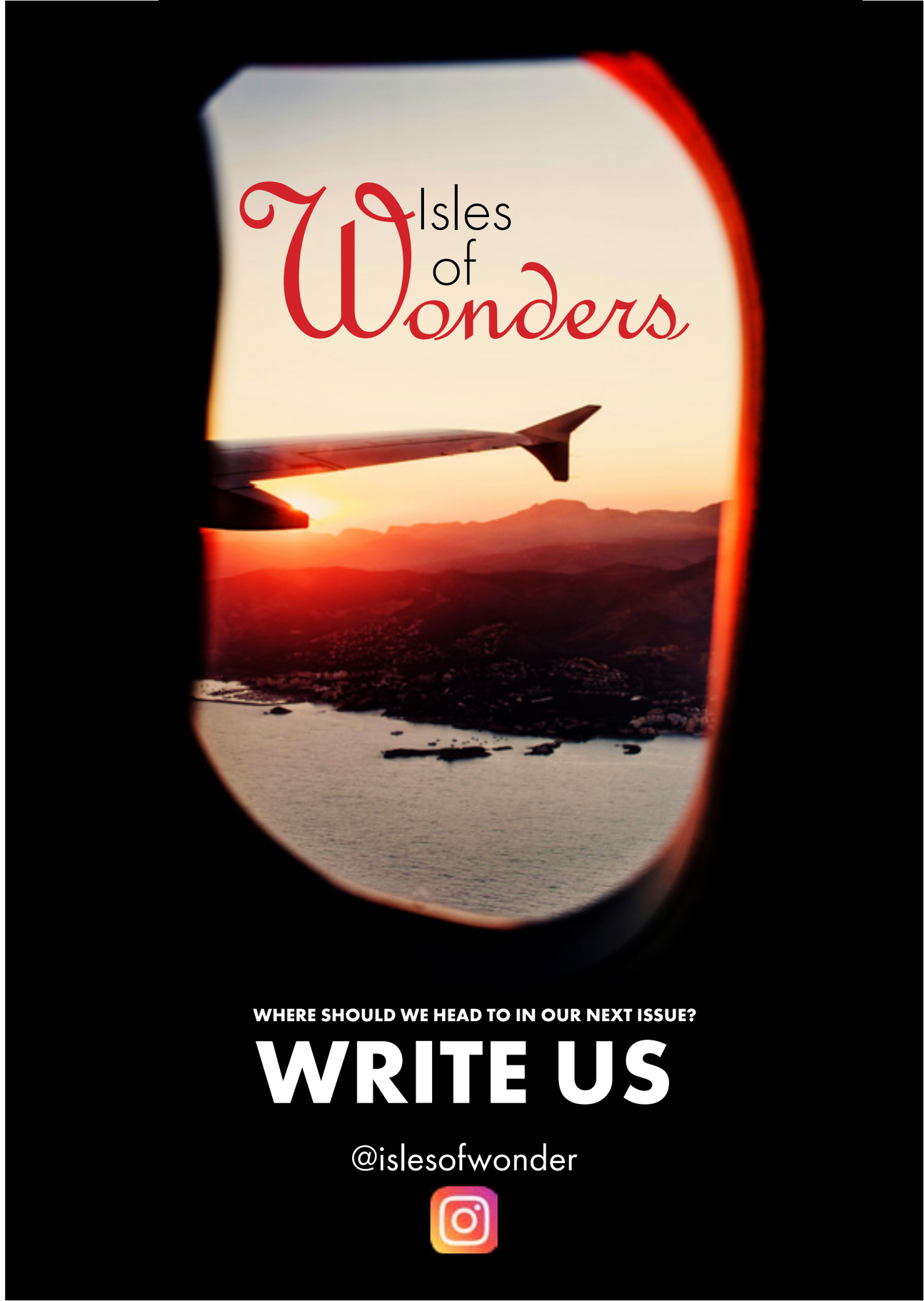
CONNECTIVITY

LOCAL SIM OPTIONS:
GO Mobile – Tourist SIM with 10GB data (€10)
Melita – 7-day pass with calls + data
Epic Malta – Great EU roaming bundles

WI-FI TIPS:
Free Wi-Fi is common in hotels, and buses
Look for VisitMalta Free Wi-Fi hotspots in major tourist zones

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police / Fire / Ambulance: 112
Pharmacy info line: +356 2122 8333



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